

# Thanksgiving As An Act Of Faith

Both Testaments give us examples of the importance of saying thank you to God. In the book of Deuteronomy (26:1-11), the first fruits offering is given while rehearsing the story of God's saving acts for Israel. Deliverance from Pharaoh, and the gift of the Promised Land are viewed as gracious gifts from God. The offering is made in recognition and celebration of what God has done. The context for the offering is a party, to which everyone is invited, including the alien in the land, to honor God for all of the provisions they possess. They make the gift of the tithe (10%) with a clear understanding that God is the giver and the provider and they are recipients. The people have not earned it, even though with their labors the land has produced a crop. In the presence of God, the people eat and drink what the land has produced, giving thanks for all that God has done. The act of the offering demonstrates their understanding of the proper relationship between God and creation. God creates and provides, creation receives and responds with gratitude.



In Luke's Gospel (17:11-19), the story of the ten lepers who were cleansed punctuates this understanding relationship and thanksgiving. Only one returns to thank Jesus for the gift of healing his body. In return for his deep expression of thanks, he is also "made whole". By not only understanding the source of his healing, but by taking time to honor that source with gratitude, he receives even more of what God has to offer. He enters into a relationship that blesses his life because he honors the One who has given the gift.

Do we have an attitude of gratitude or do we believe that we are entitled to what we have? The offering reminds us that we are ultimately dependant on God for all things—an expression of deep faith. In making the gift, we believe not only that God has provided, but will continue to do so into the future. We can risk giving something away, because in the end, we believe God will continue to bless the creation that God affirmed was "very good".



*Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,  
 Who wondrous things has done, in Whom this world rejoices;  
 Who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way  
 With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*  
 — Martin Rinkart

- **Recommended Reading:**

*Enough:*

*Discovering Joy Through  
 Simplicity and Generosity*

By Adam Hamilton  
 Abingdon Press

- **Recommended Learning Opportunity:**

Disciples Development Conference  
 San Diego, California  
 January 21-23, 2011

Contact Church Foundation for more  
 information

- **Recommended Activity**

Review with your Stewardship and Finance Ministry how you want to say thank you at year end to everyone who has supported your congregation's mission and ministry. Be sure to give specific examples of how their gifts have transformed lives!

**Resources you can use!**  
 ■ Thanksgiving Issue

Do you provide alternative methods for people to make their financial gifts? More people are using electronic fund transfers to move money. Your congregation can benefit from recognizing this trend. Check with your local bank on how to set this in motion and to understand the costs involved.

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